

President Diouf and I have seen in action here today, provides peacekeeping training and nonlethal equipment to African soldiers, with the goal of helping African nations to prepare their military units, led by African commanders, to respond quickly and effectively to humanitarian and peacekeeping challenges in Africa and around the world.

Senegal was one of the first nations to support the African Crisis Response Initiative, and along with Uganda, the first to participate in its training exercises. Mali and Malawi participated soon after. We are about to begin an exercise with Ghanaian troops, along with Belgian soldiers. Later this year, we will conduct exercises with Ethiopia, and we look forward to other countries participating soon.

Our purpose is not to dominate security matters in Africa or to abandon America's role in Africa's security but, instead, to build on existing efforts, including those of African nations, the Organization for African Unity, the United Nations, France, Britain, and others, to strengthen the capacity for preserving peace here. With our African partners we will also establish a center for security studies in Africa, modeled on the Marshall Center in Germany, to provide programs for civilian and military leaders on defense policy planning and the role of militaries in democratic societies.

America will continue to be involved on this continent as long as African nations desire our assistance and our partnership in building a safer future.

Mr. President, I want to thank you and your military leaders for being such partners. And I would like to thank the members of the American military, and one in particular—General Jamerson—for his efforts, relentless over the past couple of years to build closer ties between African militaries and our own.

To meet the threats to peace and freedom we will face in the 21st century, we must strengthen our resolve in the face of hatred and violence. We must tell the aggressors and those who tear societies apart, "You will not prevail." We must prove that the peacemakers are getting stronger. And above all, we must demonstrate that the peacemakers are working together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:45 p.m. at Thies Military Base. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Col. Abdoulaye Diallo, Senegalese Commander, African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI); Maj. Adrian E. Erckenbrack, USA, Commander, Operational Detachment Bravo; and Gen. James L. Jamerson, USAF, Deputy Commander in Chief, European Command.

Statement on House Action Against Legislation Proposing a Uniform Standard Blood-Alcohol Level

April 1, 1998

It is imperative that we set a uniform standard of .08 blood-alcohol content to protect our young people from harm, make our streets safer, and help us crack down on drunk driving nationwide. Our country will not tolerate irresponsible acts that endanger our children and our Nation.

I am disappointed that the House Rules Committee has decided to keep the critical .08 legislation from coming to the floor under the BESTEA transportation bill. By establishing a strong but sensible limit on blood-alcohol content, we could save as many as 600 lives a year. Saving lives and promoting responsibility should not be partisan issues.

Last month, under the leadership of Senator Lautenberg and Senator DeWine, the Senate overwhelmingly supported the .08 standard for drinking and driving. The House leadership, however, once again is hiding behind procedural maneuvers by blocking this effort to protect children and help put an end to drunk driving. The American people deserve better than this.

Last night's setback was by no means final. Building on our victory in the Senate we will work to overcome this roadblock by the House leadership. We will continue the fight against drunk driving on every front. Today, as part of our comprehensive effort, we are announcing grants made possible by the leadership of Senator Byrd that will help combat underage drinking. I stand ready to aid Representative Lowey and Representative Canady as they continue their efforts to pass a sensible, uniform DUI standard. We will

keep fighting to put the brakes on drunk driving.

Proclamation 7076—National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 1998

April 1, 1998

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

All of us at one time or another have been shocked by news reports about a child who has been abused, neglected, or abandoned. Unable to comprehend such a betrayal of trust, we find ourselves hoping that these incidents are isolated and rare. The most recent reports from State child welfare agencies, however, confirm that one million cases of substantiated child abuse or neglect occur in our Nation every year. Of these cases, more than a thousand children—many under the age of four—do not survive; and most die at the hands of a parent or other family member. As a caring society that cherishes our children, we must work together to protect these little ones who cannot protect themselves.

Two of our greatest resources in the crusade against child abuse and neglect are knowledge and compassion. We must raise public awareness that these cases, while often hidden, can occur in any family and community in America. As responsible adults, we must learn more about the signs of child abuse so that we may report suspected incidents as soon as possible. We must support community programs that help to identify families at risk and intervene before abuse becomes deadly. As individuals and as members of our communities, we need to support services, programs, and legislation that will help to relieve the stresses on families that can sometimes lead to violence. We must strengthen the partnerships among schools, social service agencies, religious organizations, law enforcement, and the business community so that child abuse prevention efforts will be comprehensive, swift, and effective.

Backing up such efforts at the State and local level, my Administration is focusing Federal attention and resources on combating child abuse and neglect. We are supporting family-based prevention services that help at-risk families reduce violence in the home. We also are continuing to give the States resources to build and maintain strong protection systems for children in danger. And for those children who cannot remain safely at home, we worked with the Congress to enact the Adoption and Safe Families Act, which makes it easier to place at-risk children more quickly into a permanent and secure environment.

This month, as Americans celebrate spring and its promise of new life, let us reaffirm our commitment to the lives of our Nation's children. I encourage communities across the country to join together to raise awareness of the tragedy of child abuse, to learn more about what we can do to help end such abuse, and to strengthen efforts to support children and their families before the cycle of abuse can begin.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 1998 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by resolving to take every appropriate means to protect our children from abuse and neglect, to restore their shattered trust, and to help them grow into healthy, happy adults.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-second.

William J. Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on April 3.